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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the results of an ongoing large-scale nationally representative sample of college students, which provides time series data on attitudes for a broad array of issues. A representative sample of between 250,000 and 350,000 freshmen, entering more than 300 institutions throughout the nation, was surveyed each fall (1967-1974) by UCLA and the American Council on Education as part of the ongoing Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). The characterizations of students of the mid-1970's as growing more apathetic and as being more conservative than their predecessors of the 1960's gained little support from a comparative analysis over time. With respect to student's political self-identification, while there is a shift away from the liberal end of the spectrum, there is a parallel trend away from the conservative end as well over the six years, 1969 to 1974. The relatively high level of awareness and concern over current societal and collegiate issues among the most recent college entrants indicates that continuing strong support for reform is likely to emanate from the college community. In general, today's student body might be characterized as a more viable and effective locus for potential mobilization of social criticism and dissent possibly of more positive and constructive tone than that of the 1960's--than at any earlier time in history. (Author/PC)

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# Trends in Attitudes on Political, Social, and Collegiate Issues Among College Students: The Mid-1960's to Mid-1970*

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Trends in Attitudes on Political, Social, and Collegiate Issues Among College Students: The Mid-1960's to Mid-1970*

For several decades prior to the mid-1960's, most specifically the 1950's, American colleges and universities were viewed as quiescent communities which provided accommodations and instruction to "silent generations" of students. In sharp contrast, the 1960's saw the campuses become a locus of political and social activism and, consequently, the target of intensive scrutiny by governmental agencies, social critics and commentators, and the general public. Since the turn of the decade, the pre-1960 characterizations are again being applied to describe present students. As early as 1970, Kingman Brewster described the campuses as experiencing an "eerie tranquility."[1] More recently, many commentators assert that students are becoming more conservative and they again suggest that students are passive and apathetic. Corwin succinctly summarizes the prevailing analyses of current college students:

> During the 1950's professors were chiding students for being apathetic and unconcerned about anything except finding a good job, a good marriage, and establishing a home and family. A similar passiveness seems to have emerged in the 1970's.[2]

With the rise in student activism during the 1960's came a concomitant search for "causes." Similarly, many investigators now expound on the "causes" for return to campus quiet.

Many explanations have been posited; a few of the more prominant are: (1) an antithetic turning inward to self-reflection after a period of outer-directed activity; (2) a decline in the immediacy of resolving social issues, marked primarily by discontinuance of the draft and by U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia; (3) the institutional changes which have taken place during the past decade, including abolishment of in loco parentis at many institutions, increased student participation in campus governance, and implementation of programs to provide greater representation of women and minorities in the campus community; (4) the tightened economy and the return to intensive academic effort necessary for college graduates to compete successfully for a limited number of available positions; and (5) because of a natural cyclical evolution of periods of calm and student activism in collegiate history.

Much of the commentary on the "new" American college student of the 1970's derives from impressionistic anecdotal information; and much of the analyses of the causes of return to quiet and apathy are hence predicated on meager evidence. A more solid base of information is needed to draw reliable conclusions. What are the facts? Are today's students different than their predecessors of a few years ago? If so, in what ways have their attitudes toward major political, social, and campus issues been altered? Are definite trends or shifts discernible?

To the extent that empirical data on college students' attitudes have been collected, most reported studies are

restricted in their generalizability.[3] Often these studies are based on a relatively small number of cases, sometimes from a sample of students at a single institution. Moreover, many are restricted to single social issues, rather than a broad range of issues, and do not have time series data available. In contrast, the results reported here are based on an ongoing large-scale nationally representative sample of students which provides time series data on attitudes for a broad array of issues.

## Data Source

In the Fall of 1974, the ninth annual survey of entering college freshmen was conducted by UCLA and the American Council on Education as part of the ongoing Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). A representative sample of between 250,000 and 350,000 freshmen, entering more than 300 institutions throughout the nation, has been surveyed each Fall. The institutions include both two- and four-year colleges and universities. The survey data are statistically weighted to be representative of the total population of entering college students, and annual normative data are reported.[4]

Since 1967, the CIRP instrument has contained items asking students to provide their opinion on a number of political, national, and campus issues. The questions on issues in the survey questionnaires have varied over the years; some new items have been added, others are periodically dropped from the instrument, and some of the items have been rephrased. In total, more than 50 different substantive issues have been addressed at

least once in the CIRP surveys since 1967. For the present analyses, data are presented for only those attitudinal items for which there are time series data available (assessed in at least three different years) and which have been included in one of the surveys for a relatively recent cohort (since 1970) of students. Furthermore, those attitudinal items which have undergone wording changes are omitted from these trend analyses inasmuch as syntactical changes in substantive items have been shown to affect response rates and hence the accuracy and comparability necessary for assessing trends.[5] In all, 20 attitudinal items meet the above criteria and are discussed below.

Because student attitudes, like those of any population, are subject to instability, some small changes over time may be entirely spurious. Moreover, some changes in the stratification and weighting procedures have been introduced in the CIRP survey design from one year to another.[6] Only those changes are emphasized which appear to be reliable and valid in light of the possible effects of design and sampling variability and the potentially spurious fluctuations in the stability of student responses.

## Analyses

The data described below are extracted from the CIRP normative results.[7] The analyses first address the general question of the recent changes in political self-identification of students, followed by an assessment of students' stated positions on a series of specific societal issues and collegiate policies.

Political Identification

Students were first asked to characterize their own present political identification in the 1969 CIRP survey. A similar question has been included in each annual survey since that time, although the response categories were changed in 1970 to provide better response symmetry and slight format changes were also subsequently instituted. Despite these subtle wording alterations, a clearly discernible trend is evidenced from late 1960 to mid-1970.

In the six years for which data are available, there has been a substantial convergence from both ends of the political spectrum. Since 1969, there has been a relatively steady decline in the proportion of new entering freshmen who have endorsed a moderate or strong preference for either a liberal or a conservative political identification (Table 1). A parallel systematic increase in the proportion endorsing a middle-of-the-road position is evidenced. In 1969, only 44 percent endorsed this position; by 1973, over one-half characterized their political views as "middle-of-the-road," and 55 percent of 1974 freshmen did so.

These results suggest neither increased liberalism nor increased conservativism among successive new cohorts of college students. Rather, the convergence toward the center of the political spectrum could be characterized as a political "depolarization" of college students in the mid-1970's as compared with their predecessors of several years earlier. However, self-identification of one's political preference is a relative term rather than an absolute one. Positions on issues which might

have been identified as "liberal" only a few years ago, for example, may now be perceived as the prevailing position of the "mainstream." Consequently, the following analyses address students' positions on specific issues and seek to extract discernible trends and shifts in these items over time.

Societal Issues

Of the numerous social issues for which students have been queried through CIRP annual surveys, eleven meet the criteria for inclusion in the present analyses. These items represent student opinion on eight general areas of social issues--women, population control, desegregation, the environment, consumer protection, economic equity, crime, and drugs. The precise wording of the questions relevant to these issues, and the proportion of students endorsing the statement in each year in which it was included in the CIRP surveys, are shown in Table 2.

One of the more substantial shifts in student opinion is with respect to the traditional role of women, indicative of the possible impact of the women's liberation movement on American youth. In 1967, the first year in which the item was included, well over one-half of all entering freshmen favored the conventional role of women. Endorsement of this item has declined steadily since that time, with less than 30 percent of all students favoring this view in 1974. Moreover, a greater proportion of freshmen entering college in the mid-1970's than of those entering at the turn of the decade favor full job equality for women. In 1970, 8 of 10 freshmen endorsed equal salaries

and opportunities for women; fully 9 of 10 freshmen since 1972 have supported the same position.

An item to assess student awareness of the problem of population growth and the support of population control was also included in the 1967 survey and has been repeated in recent surveys. In 1967, 42 percent endorsed a program to discourage large family size; by 1971, 68 percent supported the same item. Since 1971, the proportion has declined, to 60 percent in 1974, although current support for population control is still well above that of the 1960's.

Students' position on school desegregation was measured in three consecutive years of the CIRP surveys. These data indicate that students in the early 1970's were about equally split on their opinion that the Federal government is not doing enough to promote school desegregation. Only minor fluctuations in the proportion endorsing this issue are apparent, and no definite trend is discernible. Clearly, there is no evidence from the CIRP surveys to indicate that students have recently become rapidly more conservative or more liberal on the racial issue in the United States as it is measured by an item on the attitude toward school desegregation.

With respect to the environment, a substantial majority of students believe that not enough is being done to control pollution. In 1971, over 90 percent of students agreed that not enough was being done. The proportion endorsing such a position has declined regularly since that time, to 83 percent of freshmen entering college in 1974. However, as with several other

attitudinal items in the CIRP surveys, there is a variable time referent inherent in the wording of the questions. Since the turn of the decade, substantial and controversial regulations have been implemented, most notably automobile emission controls and air emission standards for industry. Despite the negative publicity regarding some of these policies, the added consumer costs resulting from increased prices and energy consumption, and implementation of higher standards of emission control requiring the use of more expensive high quality energy resources, the vast majority of young people entering college in 1974 still endorse stronger regulatory activity than that currently mandated by the Federal government.

A greater consumer protection effort on the part of the Federal government is likewise endorsed by a majority of students and has shown little change in recent years. Fully three-fourths of each cohort of new college freshmen in each of the past four years have agreed that not enough is being done to protect the consumer from faulty goods and services.

The next two attitudinal items shown in Table 2 address issues of economic equi in the United States. While data for both items are limited to a relatively recent period and hence provide minimal information on which to judge possible trends, they are suggestive of a small increase in support of greater economic equity. In 1972, 73 percent of new freshmen believed that the wealthy should pay a larger share of taxes, compared to 76 percent in 1974. With regard to a more strongly worded

equalitarian statement, that people should be paid equally for hard work regardless of their ability or quality of work, the proportion of student support increased from 25 percent in 1972 to 28 percent in 1974. Clearly, these short-term data are not supportive of a hypothesis of a recent conservative shift among students with respect to existent economic differentials and financial wealth in this country.

The items regarding crime and the courts that have been included in CIRP surveys likewise show little change over the time period. Approximately one-half of the freshmen entering college during the first half of the 1970's agreed that "there is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals." In the six years for which data are available on this item, the highest levels of endorsement are found in the earlier years, but the change over time has been relatively slight although not in a more conservative direction. Similarly, for the three-year span (1969-1971) in which students were queried with respect to capital punishment, there was a slight increase in the proportion endorsing abolishment of capital punishment. In 1971, 58 percent of students apparently favored elimination of the death penalty.

The most pronounced trend in attitudes concerns the laws on marijuana. Since 1968, the first year in which an item on this subject was included in the survey, the proportion of freshmen who agree that marijuana should be legalized has more than doubled. In 1968, one-fifth of the entering freshmen thought

marijuana should be legalized; in 1969, one-fourth thought so; in 1970 and 1971 almost two-fifths agreed; and in the last three years the proportion appears to have stabilized at 47 to 48 percent.

Collegiate Issues

Nine attitudinal items on collegiate issues from the CIRP surveys meet the criteria for inclusion in the present analyses. More of these items have longer-term survey data available than was true for the societal issues considered above. The collegiate items are classified into five general areas--student jurisdiction, administrative jurisdiction, admissions policy, grading practice, and athletic policy--as shown in Table 3.

An item on the role of the student in evaluating faculty for promotion decisions has been regularly included in every CIRP survey instrument since 1967. From 1967 through 1972 there was a regular increase in the proportion of each new cohort of freshmen who agreed that faculty promotions should be based in part on student evaluations. In 1972, fully three-fourths of students endorsed this position, although the more recent two years indicate a slight trend reversal. Nevertheless, substantially higher proportions of students in the mid-1970's than in the latter 1960's believe they should have a voice in the decisions influencing their instructors' advancement.

Four separate items on administrative responsibility have been included in virtually all CIRP surveys. Without exception,

each reflects a growing endorsement, from the mid-1960's to the mid-1970's, for restricting the purview of academic administrators, although the data from the last several years suggest a leveling off of the longer-term trend. In the 1967-68 period, approximately one-half of the new college students agreed that student publications should be cleared by college officials and that college officials were too lax in dealing with student protesters; by the mid-1970's only about one-third of the new students were endorsing the same statements. In the latter part of the 1960's about one-third of the new entrants indicated they agreed that college officials had the right to ban certain persons from speaking on campus, as compared to 23 percent of freshmen in the mid-1970's. With respect to the rights of college officials to regulate students' off-campus behavior, 23 percent of 1968 freshmen thought this to be legitimate authority of officials, compared to only 14 percent in 1974.

One of the few indications of a less liberal trend, albeit slight, among successive cohorts of new college students is with respect to giving preferential treatment in college admissions to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the mid- to later-1960's, over two-fifths of students endorsed this item, compared to 38 percent in 1974. Suggestive counter indications are however evidenced over the four-year period in which students have reported their support of open admissions policies for public institutions. In 1971, the first year in which the item was included in the survey, 37 percent approved of open admissions;

in the most recent year for which data are available, 1974, the comparable figure is 40 percent.

The only other indication of growing support for traditional academic procedures is with respect to grading practices. At the turn of the decade, a surprisingly high proportion of freshmen (44 percent) thought that the grading system should be abolished. There has been a regular decline in support for abolishment in each successive year, with only 29 percent of the most recent college entrants endorsing this position.

The last item in Table 3 indicates that a growing minority of new students support de-emphasis of collegiate sports. In the earliest survey year, 1967, only one-fifth agreed that college would be improved if organized sports were de-emphasized; in 1974, this proportion had grown to 28 percent.

## Conclusions

The characterizations of students of the mid-1970's as growing more apathetic and as being more conservative than their predecessors of the turbulent campus years of the middle and latter 1960's gains little support from a comparative analysis over time of student opinion on a broad array of contemporary social and collegiate issues, based on the largest ongoing national assessment program of college students. While incidents of massive student protests, widely publicized in the 1960's, have clearly dissipated, the relatively high rate of current endorsement of liberal positions by new college students as compared to the entering student generations of the 1960's is strong evidence

of high support for the continuation and strengthening of social programs and policies and for continuing reform in higher education.

Such a conclusion is not immediately apparent from a cursory review of the CIRP data, however. The most currently available survey tabulations, for 1974, when compared only to the immediately preceding survey year data, indicate a general leveling out of student opinion, or a suggestive but slight conservative reversal, in endorsement of several of the attitudinal items. Moreover, the longer-term trend in students' political self-identification has been away from the liberal end of the political spectrum. But these partial data may be illusionary. Statistics from the more recent several years of freshmen cohorts, compared to comparable figures at the turn of the decade or before, when available, indicates no substantial longer-term conservative trend on any societal issues and on few collegiate issues, the most notable exception being the decline in student support for abolishment of college grades.

With respect to students' political self-identification, as noted earlier, while there is a shift away from the liberal end of the spectrum there is a parallel trend away from the conservative end as well over the six years, 1969 through 1974, in which such an item has been used in the CIRP annual surveys of new college freshmen. This convergence, or "depolarization," of political identification from the late 1960's to the mid-1970's is accompanied, as shown above, by long-term increases over the

comparable period in liberal support for most societal and collegiate issues and policies. The unification of this apparent discrepancy, between the convergence to middle-of-the-road political identification and the increased liberalization in endorsement of most specific issues from the mid- and later 1960's to the mid-1970's, would be found in a theme which suggests that the "liberal" issues of yesterday's students are viewed as the "mainstream" issues by today's new students.

The relatively high level of awareness and concern over current societal and collegiate issues among the most recent cohorts of new college entrants, particularly in contrast to their predecessors at the turn of the decade or before, indicates that continuing strong support for reform is likely to emanate from the college community. Moreover, research on the changes in student attitudes after entering college indicates that the same liberalizing trends that have been observed in successive classes of entering freshmen also occur within each class during the undergraduate years.[8] Consequently, it would seem inappropriate to characterize the present generation of college students as mirror images of their pre-1960's predecessors or as more conservative than their peers in the student generations of the 1960's. Similarly, it is inappropriate to expound on the "causes" of not only the recent decline in student activism but also the "causes" for an apparently unsupported supposition of growing student conservatism, apathy, and passivity. Indeed, the student body of American higher education

today might well be characterized as a viable and effective locus for potential mobilization in social criticism and dissent, albeit of possibly more positive and constructive tone than that of the 1960's, of a magnitude greater than at any earlier time in history.

## Footnotes

*Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American College Personnel Association, Atlanta, March, 1975. Support for preparation of this paper was derived in part by grant SSH72-03432 A02 (formerly GI-34394) from the RANN program of the National Science Foundation. Grateful acknowledgment is extended to the American Council on Education, the University of California at Los Angeles, and to Alexander W. Astin for providing the data reported in this paper. The interpretations herein are, however, solely the responsibility of the authors.

[1]Excerpt from an address by Kingman Brewster, referred to in Alan E. Bayer and Alexander W. Astin, "Campus Unrest, 1970-71: Was it Really All That Quiet?", Educational Record, Vol. 52 (Fall, 1971), pp. 301-313.

[2]Ronald G. Corwin, Education in Crisis: A Sociological Analysis of Schools and Universities in Transition (New York: John Wiley, 1974), p. 175.

[3]See, for example, Dean R. Hoge, "College Students' Value Patterns in the 1950's and 1960's," Sociology of Education, Vol. 44 (Spring, 1971), pp. 170-197; Richard Kelly, B. Derrell Hart, and Ronald Narel, "Faculty Role Preferences of Students in Three Types of Colleges," Improving College and University Teaching, Vol. 21 (Winter, 1973), pp. 58-59; Thomas J. Kerver, "Student Attitudes and Opinion at the University of Wisconsin," College and University Journal, Vol. 11 (March, 1972), pp. 23-26; Marvin R. McMillan, "Attitudes of College Men Toward Career

Involvement of Married Women," Vocational Guidance Quarterly, Vol. 24 (September, 1974), pp. 8-11; Marshall W. Meyer, "Harvard Students in the Midst of Crisis: Note on the Sources of Leftism," Sociology of Education, Vol. 46 (Spring, 1973), pp. 203-218; and Peter W. VanArsdale, William E. Sedlacek, and Glenwood C. Brooks, Jr., "Trends in Black Student Attitudes at a Predominantly White University," Negro Educational Review, Vol. 22 (July/October, 1971), pp. 133-145.

[4]National Norms for Entering College Freshmen, annual reports for Fall 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, and 1972 (Washington: American Council on Education), and The American Freshmen, national norms for Fall 1973 and 1974 (Los Angeles: Graduate School of Education, University of California at Los Angeles).

[5]A general discussion of the effects of alternate forms of question wording is presented in Herbert H. Hyman, Secondary Analysis of Sample Surveys: Principles, Procedures, and Potentialities (New York: John Wiley, 1972), pp. 194-196. Illustrative analyses are reported in Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Wanted: Rules for Wording Structured Questionnaires," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 34 (Summer, 1970), pp. 191-201; and Alan E. Bayer, "Construction of Race Item for Survey Research," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 36 (Winter 1972-73), pp. 592-602.

[6]Currently in preparation by the CIRP staff is a new set of tabular data from early survey years which are, to the extent possible, based on the stratification design and weighting procedures utilized for the surveys conducted in the mid-1970's.

[7]Sources are the annual normative reports, cited in footnote 4, for all students entering all types of higher education institutions in the Fall term of each academic year.

[8]A general review of such studies through the late 1960's is reported in Kenneth A. Feldman and Theodore M. Newcomb, The Impact of College on Students, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969). Recent studies include Arthur W. Chickering, "Civil Liberties and the Experience of College," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 41 (November, 1970), pp. 599-606; Alan E. Bayer, Jeannie T. Royer, and Richard M. Webb, "Four Years After College Entry," ACE Research Reports, Vol. 8:1 (Washington: American Council on Education, 1973); and Linda D. Molm and Alexander W. Astin, "Personal Characteristics and Attitude Changes of Student Protesters," Journal of College Student Personnel, Vol. 14 (May, 1973), pp. 239-249.

TABLE 1

Political Identification of Students
at the Time of College Entry: 1969-1974[a]

| Political Self-Identification[b] | Year of College Entrance | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 |
| Far left (Left) | 3.1 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.2 |
| Liberal | 29.5 | 33.5 | 35.3 | 32.8 | 32.6 | 28.0 |
| Middle-of-the-road | 44.4 | 45.4 | 46.8 | 48.3 | 50.7 | 55.1 |
| Conservative (Moderately conservative) | 20.5 | 17.1 | 14.5 | 15.8 | 13.9 | 13.9 |
| Far right (Strongly conservative) | 2.4 | 1.0 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.8 |

SOURCES: Annual survey tabulations for entering college freshmen as compiled by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP).

[a]All figures in table are weighted percentages

[b]Response categories shown in parentheses were employed in 1969 only.

TABLE 2

ATTITUDES OF FRESHMEN TOWARD SELECTED SOCIETAL ISSUES, BY YEAR OF ENTRY TO COLLEGE[a]

| Issue | Year of College Entrance | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 |
| WOMEN'S RIGHTS | | | | | | | | |
| The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family | 56.6 | - | - | 47.8 | 42.2 | 37.0 | 30.4 | 29.8 |
| Women should receive the same salary and opportunities for advancement as men in comparable positions | - | - | - | 81.3 | 87.8 | 91.3 | 91.9 | 91.5 |
| POPULATION | | | | | | | | |
| Parents should be discouraged from having large families | 42.2 | - | - | - | 68.5 | 67.4 | 65.4 | 59.8 |
| RACIAL DESEGREGATION | | | | | | | | |
| The Federal government is not doing enough to promote school desegregation | - | - | - | - | 51.7 | 48.4 | 48.6 | - |
| THE ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | | | |
| The Federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution | - | - | - | - | 90.5 | 89.6 | 88.1 | 82.6 |
| THE CONSUMER | | | | | | | | |
| The Federal government is not doing enough to protect the consumer from faulty goods and services | - | - | - | - | 76.6 | 76.0 | 78.0 | 75.1 |
| ECONOMIC EQUITY | | | | | | | | |
| Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now | - | - | - | - | - | 72.9 | 72.7 | 75.5 |
| As long as they work hard, people should be paid equally regardless of ability or quality of work | - | - | - | - | - | 24.9 | 26.8 | 28.4 |
| CRIME | | | | | | | | |
| There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals | - | - | 54.3 | 51.6 | 48.1 | 50.3 | 50.1 | 51.5 |
| Capital punishment (the death penalty) should be abolished | - | - | 53.9 | 56.3 | 57.6 | - | - | - |
| DRUGS | | | | | | | | |
| Marijuana should be legalized | - | 19.4 | 25.6 | 38.4 | 38.7 | 46.6 | 48.2 | 46.7 |

SOURCES: Annual survey tabulations for entering college freshmen as compiled by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP).

[a]Figures in table are weighted percentages of students checking "agree strongly" or "agree somewhat".

TABLE 3

ATTITUDES OF FRESHMEN TOWARD SELECTED COLLEGIATE ISSUES, BY YEAR OF ENTRY TO COLLEGE[a]

| Issue | Year of College Entrance | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 |
| STUDENT JURISDICTION | | | | | | | | |
| Faculty promotions should be based in part on student evaluations | 62.2 | 63.2 | 67.5 | 71.3 | 76.0 | 76.3 | 74.8 | 73.7 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION | | | | | | | | |
| Student publications should be cleared by college officials | 52.2 | 56.4 | 52.0 | 42.8 | 32.5 | 32.5 | 30.8 | 32.7 |
| Most college officials have been too lax in dealing with student protests on campus | 47.8 | 54.5 | 60.3 | 58.5 | 46.5 | 42.6 | 36.8 | 35.0 |
| College officials have the right to ban persons with extreme views from speaking on campus | 39.5 | 31.7 | 32.2 | 33.2 | 27.8 | 25.5 | 23.1 | 22.6 |
| College officials have the right to regulate student behavior off campus | - | 23.3 | 19.9 | 17.0 | 13.8 | 12.8 | 11.4 | 13.7 |
| ADMISSIONS POLICY | | | | | | | | |
| Students from disadvantaged social backgrounds should be given preferential treatment in college admissions | 43.3 | 41.6 | 41.4 | 44.0 | 40.1 | 40.9 | 38.8 | 38.4 |
| Open admissions (admitting anyone who applies) should be adopted by all publicly supported colleges | - | - | - | - | 37.2 | 37.6 | 35.3 | 40.0 |
| GRADING PRACTICE | | | | | | | | |
| College grades should be abolished | - | - | - | 44.4 | 42.6 | 38.5 | 34.8 | 29.3 |
| ATHLETIC POLICY | | | | | | | | |
| College would be improved if organized sports were de-emphasized | 20.8 | - | - | - | 26.0 | 25.8 | 24.8 | 28.5 |

SOURCES: Annual survey tabulations for entering college freshmen as compiled by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP).

[a]Figures in table are weighted percentages of students checking "agree strongly" or "agree somewhat".